Vancouver metro

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2016

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By Emily Sadler

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NOBODY HOME

Mayor pitches empty homes tax to combat Vancouver's near zero vacancy crisis

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JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO

Province plans to target landlords 'gaming' system

RENT LAW

Fixed-term tenancy at heart of changes

Jen St. Denis
Metro | Vancouver

As Metro Vancouver renters struggle to find and keep a place amid steeply rising rates, British Columbia's minister responsible for housing says his government is looking at reforming some legislation to prevent landlords from "gaming" the system.

But any changes will likely target fixed-term tenancy, not the practice known as "renoviction," in which landlords evict all tenants in a building in order to renovate and raise rents.

"We're doing some work on (fixed-term) because that appears to be a gaming of the system, so we have to stop the gaming of the system," said Rich Coleman, the minister of natural gas development and minister responsible for housing. "If someone goes into a contract with somebody for a period of time, it's the same thing if you lease a commercial building: it's considered as a commercial lease because you have a fixed term ... you've entered into something that expires.

"That's when we're going to have to look at the transition to look at something in place that says you can't just game it over to a new lease and jack it up to a point that's unreasonable."

Tenant advocates say they have seen an increase in renters being evicted through renovations or through landlord and family use, and some tenants have also faced pressure to sign a type of rental agreement called a fixed-term tenancy with a vacate clause.

That allows landlords to offer a "new" tenancy at the end of the term, often with a rent increase far above the 2.9 per cent allowed by law.

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No income? No problem! Irregular mortgage lending under scrutiny

REAL ESTATE

New Democrat wants closer review of credit unions, taxes

Jen St. Denis
Metro | Vancouver

NDP MLA David Eby is calling on provincial regulators to take a closer look at credit unions following revelations that several large Canadian banks have laxer rules in place for wealthy foreign buyers than for Canadian home purchasers.

A Globe and Mail investigation published Wednesday showed, for wealthy international buyers who pay a 50 per cent or more down payment, both Scotiabank and the Bank of Montreal exempt buyers from income verification and credit history checks that normally apply.

Eby said the information backs up a study of "unusual" home ownership patterns he tracked for urban planner Andy Yan earlier last year. Last November, Yan published a study showing that many owners of multimillion-dollar properties in Vancouver's Dunbar neighbourhood were listed as "homemaker" or "student," while most of the properties had been bought with mortgages from Canadian banks.

"The message of Andy's study was, look at these bizarre trends in our real estate market, look at the fact that students and homemakers are buying more real estate than professionals, and they're buying them with mortgages," Eby said.

Following the publication of the Globe story, Eby pulled several land titles out of the batch he had compiled for Yan's study. Eby believes these particular titles illustrate the "bizarre" nature of the Vancouver housing market.

One property, on Angus Street, was initially jointly registered to a student, and a housewife.

"Then (the student) was taken off that title and became the owner of a $7.1-million property," Eby said. "Then he sold that property less than a year later for $8.35 million, and to me it was surprising that a student was buying and selling — well, flipping — properties in Point Grey." Eby pointed out that difference was worth a cool $1.25 million.

A Globe investigation published last week revealed in detail the inner workings of a scheme to funnel money from Chinese buyers into Vancouver real estate, using a resident buyer as a proxy and evading Canadian taxes. In response, the Canada Revenue Agency has directed 70 auditors to focus on real estate activity in B.C.

In April, Eby used an analysis by Vancouver-based data analyst Jens von Bergmann to highlight the unusually high number of homeowners in Vancouver, Burnaby and Richmond who own homes worth millions, but report poverty-level incomes.

Jamie Edwardson, a spokesperson for B.C.'s Ministry of Finance, said that in July FICOM — the provincial regulator overseeing credit unions, real estate and mortgage brokers — sent out a notice to its members and credit unions "to highlight and emphasize the lending criteria along exactly these lines."

"Not to say, hey, don't lend to students with large lumps of cash specifically, but they did take some steps to make sure lenders were paying attention to really strict lending requirements," Edwardson said.

While real estate makes up a large portion of their business, credit unions generally make loans to domestic buyers for lower values, he added.

A new house under construction in the Dunbar area of Vancouver. The original house on the site was apparently purchased by a student for $1.85 million, according to MLA David Eby. PHOTOS BY JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO

Point Grey MLA David Eby.

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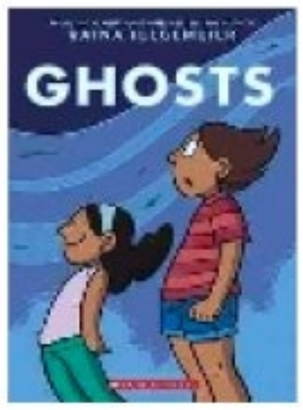

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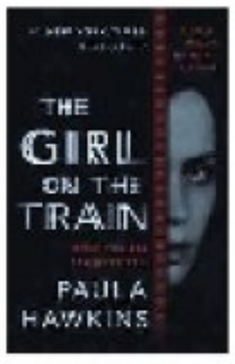

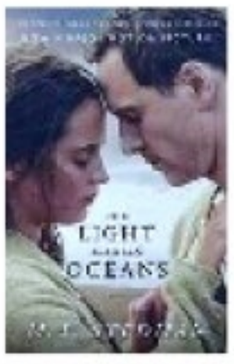

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RESCUE SERVICES FIREBOATS MAKE GRAND ENTRANCE Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services unveiled one of two new fireboats in False Creek, near Granville Island, on Wednesday. The two boats were purchased by the City of Vancouver for $1.8 million each. The fireboats can pump 3,000 gallons of water per minute and feature a thermal-imaging system that allows crews to easily detect people in the water. Vancouver Fire Service will eventually have three boats in total — one alternate (an old fireboat) and two new ones. WANYEE LI/METRO; PHOTO: JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO

Plan to tax empty homes unveiled

REAL ESTATE

Up to 2 per cent tax would rely on honest self-reporting

David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

After learning that more than 10,000 housing units in Vancouver consume practically no electricity for 12 months of the year, the city is pitching an up-to two per cent tax on empty suites.

Mayor Gregor Robertson announced the proposal on Wednesday morning, insisting the measure — yet to be approved by council — is "fair for taxpayers" and will have exemptions for "snowbirds" living elsewhere part of the year and Vancouverites working or studying abroad. The tax would be between 0.5 and 2 per cent on the value of the home.

"Ultimately, this is going to affect a very small number of people holding property for business," he told reporters outside city hall. "Nobody's living there most of the year. We want to be sure we do have people living in these homes."

But details of the proposal are still vague, in particular how the program would be enforced. The city's general manager of community services, Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas, said that because electricity usage figures provided by BC Hydro are subject to privacy restrictions, authorities will have to rely on honest homeowners declaring their units are empty for 12 months when they file their taxes.

It will then be up to an unspecified number of auditors, armed with the ability to impose fines on violators, to investigate compliance.

> **At a time when the vacancy rates are so low, we need to take action.**
> Mayor Gregor Robertson

While some questioned why absentee owners can be trusted to self-report empty homes, experts said that approach is already how the Canada Revenue Agency works and so is "not unprecedented," said Tom Davidoff, an economist at the University of British Columbia's Sauder School of Business. The empty homes tax is a good one, he said.

"We should be taxing people who live and work here less, and people who just invest in property here more," he told Metro. "This absolutely accomplishes that.

"Real-estate investors respond to incentives; there's plenty of evidence for that."

Meanwhile urban planner Andy Yan, director of Simon Fraser University's City Program, also applauded the proposed tax. He's been studying owner occupancy levels for years and previously examined energy use as an indicator of vacancy.

"Innovative policies like this explore what to do in a 21st-century globalized real-estate market," Yan told Metro. "The challenge of any public policy is how they will measure success or failing. That's to be determined … but the question is enforceability and compliance."

The tax would be avoided if a home were rented out, Robertson said. Asked why real-estate speculators would heed a relatively small additional tax with prices skyrocketing, he said that's their choice.

"Some people who can afford it will not want to rent out their property," he said. "Therefore they're going to make a generous contribution to affordable housing in Vancouver.... Either way we're going to help the cause of affordable rental housing."

Council will vote next week to "send this out to the people of Vancouver for feedback," and if approved would not be implemented until the 2017 tax year.

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MARINE LIFE

Abrasions on whale 'some of the worst I've seen': Official

Wanyee Li
Metro | Vancouver

The juvenile humpback whale was struggling to breathe due to the weight and tension of the rope. COURTESY PAUL COTTRELL/DFO

A juvenile humpback whale was entangled for at least 12 hours in the waters near Klemtu, B.C., before rescue crews could cut it free on Monday.

It was the fifth whale rescue of the year for the Department of Fisheries (DFO), and one of the most intense, said Paul Cottrell, the Pacific marine mammal co-ordinator.

"If we didn't get it out of there in the next little while it would be in trouble," he said.

"It was lifting up a significant amount of weight and tension every time it went up to breathe."

The whale was wrapped up in a rope attached to an anchor under a buoy, which was dragging the animal downwards. Staff from a nearby fish farm operated by Marine Harvest reported the distressed whale Monday morning.

The Kitasoo First Nation kept watch on the whale until Cottrell flew in from Vancouver at 2:30 p.m. He had seen photos of the animal prior to arriving and the amount of rope wrapped around the animal painted an urgent situation.

"He definitely would have drowned given the weight he had on him. He probably wouldn't have lasted another day there," he said.

The whale had abrasions on its whole body but the worst cuts were near its tail, said Cottrell.

"The abrasions were some of the worst I've seen."

The rescue crew was able to borrow a barge from Marine Harvest and with the help of a drone provided by the Kitasoo First Nation, Cottrell drew up a plan.

Meanwhile, the whale was thrashing and spinning in the water as it struggled to breathe. But the crew had to be careful because one wrong cut could tighten the rope even deeper into the whale.

The sky was dark by the time Cottrell made four cuts through the lines to release the tension and remove the rope.

"It was just an unbelievable feeling," he said.

The whale was spotted Wednesday, according to Cottrell.

"He was acting normal but we'll keep an eye on him."

The DFO has seen an "uptick" in the number of whale entanglements but it may be due to a recovery in humpback numbers, said Cottrell.

"Humpbacks we're seeing more especially in inshore waters and that's a great thing but we're also seeing more interaction with fishing gear."

But he says the animal has a good chance of surviving if someone reports it right away.

"Our success rate, if we can locate the animal, is near 100 per cent."

CRIME

Man charged in death of Mountie

Criminal charges have been laid against a man six months after a Vancouver Island Mountie was killed when her police cruiser was hit broadside by a pickup truck.

British Columbia's Criminal Justice Branch said Wednesday that Kenneth Fenton, 28, faces five charges after the death of Const. Sarah Beckett. She died while working an overnight shift April 5 for the West Shore RCMP in Langford, B.C.

Charges against Fenton include impaired driving causing death and flight from police causing death.

The Criminal Justice Branch statement also said Fenton faces charges of dangerous driving causing death, impaired driving and refusing to provide a blood sample.

Fenton is scheduled to appear in provincial court in nearby Colwood, B.C., at a later date.

Beckett, 32, left behind a husband and two sons, aged five and two.

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WORKSHOPS

Festival sprouts food security conversations and community

David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

Paul Taylor, executive director of Gordon Neighbourhood House, visits one of the garden plots. DAVID P. BALL/METRO

Paul Taylor steps around a raised planter brimming with nearly ripe cherry tomatoes behind an apartment block in Vancouver's West End, proudly describing how neighbourhood children actually planted and tended the urban crop.

"The other day, they harvested bags and bags of the cherry tomatoes they'd planted," the Gordon Neighbourhood House executive director told Metro during a garden tour on Wednesday. "The kids planted them here with our farmer and checked on them regularly.

"If kids can grow anything, they'll eat anything."

Vancouverites love to talk about food: favourite eateries, farm market finds, organic and local cuisine.

Starting today, food lovers have a chance to dig beneath the surface at the West End Food Festival — which offers everything from cooking and growing workshops to community conversations about migrant farm labour.

And, of course, lots of eating, Taylor promised.

"It's not just a food party or an opportunity to come together to eat," he explained. "Food is a major part of the conversation in Vancouver — which is great, people are very passionate about food and where it's grown — but we're not having enough conversations about people who don't have access to food."

The annual festival, he said, is a chance to bring families together regardless of their age, income or experience with food, and share delicious meals together while exchanging and sharing food-related skills.

For instance, on Thursday guest chef (and local member of the legislative assembly) Spencer Chandra Herbert will cook a free tomato soup lunch using the community garden's cherry tomatoes — which the politician originally sprouted in his own window.

"We want to create opportunities for people to access food in our neighbourhood house and beyond," Taylor said, "regardless of how much money they have.

"The food we're sharing with our neighbours should really be something they can celebrate and that we can be proud of."

The West End Food Festival runs through Tuesday at Gordon Neighbourhood House (1019 Broughton St.). For more information and the full calendar of events, visit www.westendfoodfestival.wordpress.com.

10 TOP PRIZES TO GO IN BC.

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JOURNALISM

Metro racks up award nominations

Metro has been nominated for two Canadian Online Publishing Awards (COPA) for its coverage of traffic fatalities in Toronto and of the Fort McMurray fire in Alberta.

Metro Toronto received a nomination for "Best Article or Series" for Toronto's Deadly Streets.

Bridging investigative journalism and advocacy, managing editor Angela Mullins and reporter Luke Simcoe produced a series that went beyond the statistics to bring the human impact of road deaths to the fore. Their reporting successfully moved public and political opinion regarding traffic-related fatalities.

James Alvir, interactive producer, built an online tool that helped readers contact their local councillors and agitate for change. Hundreds of readers did just that, and the #TODeadlyStreets hashtag trended on Twitter in Toronto on each of the five days the series ran.

Metro Calgary and Metro Edmonton are nominated for "Best News Coverage" for their reporting of the Fort McMurray fire.

When the city of more than 80,000 people had to be evacuated because a wildfire suddenly switched course, Metro provided readers across Alberta the latest information on the developing event. Darren Krause, Metro Calgary's managing editor, coordinated coverage, providing readers with a mix of news and must-know utility information as the fire started to burn down entire neighbourhoods. While most travelled south, Metro Edmonton's managing editor, Tim Querengesser, went north to provide coverage from the scene.

Reporters Jeremy Simes, Alex Boyd and Liz Brown recorded the experiences of people fleeing the fire-ravaged city. They included the story of a man who watched his home burn on his security camera, a 16-year-old girl who fled the city on horseback and a pilot who flew animals to safety.

Winners will be announced on Nov. 7 at in Toronto. METRO

A snowy owl in Montana. 86 species of birds are threatened by plummeting populations, habitat destruction and climate change, a report says. THE MISSOULIAN VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

1.5 billion fewer birds

WILDLIFE

Study blames climate change, loss of habitats — and cats

North American skies have grown quieter over the last decades by the absent songs of 1.5 billion birds, says the latest summary of bird populations.

The survey by dozens of government, university and environmental agencies across North America has also listed 86 species of birds — including once-common and much-loved songbirds such as the evening grosbeak and Canada warbler — that are threatened by plummeting populations, habitat destruction and climate change.

"The information on urgency is quite alarming," said Judith Kennedy of Environment Canada. "We're really getting down to the dregs of some of these populations."

The report is the most complete survey of land bird numbers to date and attempts to assess the health of populations on a continental basis. It concludes that, while there are still a lot of birds in the sky, there aren't anywhere near as many as there used to be.

Evening grosbeaks are down 92 per cent since 1970. Snowy owls have lost 64 per cent of their numbers.

Tally it all up and there should be another 1.5 billion birds perching in backyards and flying around in forests than there are, says the report.

Nor are the declines stopping. Among those 86 species, 22 have already lost at least half of their population since 1970 and are projected to lose another 50 per cent of their numbers within the next 40 years.

The culprits are familiar.

Agriculture disturbs habitat of grassland birds and introduces pesticides into the landscape. Logging fragments the intact forests birds use as refuelling stations as they migrate. Domestic cats are thought to kill more than two billion birds a year.

"It's the death of a thousand cuts," said Kennedy.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Vibrator company sued

An American woman has launched a proposed class-action lawsuit against the Canadian-owned maker of a smartphone-enabled vibrator, alleging the company sells products that secretly collect and transmit "highly sensitive" information.

The Chicago-area woman, identified only as N.P., has made her complaints against Standard Innovation (US) Corp., which is owned by the Ottawa-based Standard Innovation Corp, over a "high-end" vibrator called the We-Vibe.

The lawsuit explains that to operate the device, users download the We-Connect app, allowing them and their partners remote control over the Bluetooth-equipped vibrator's settings.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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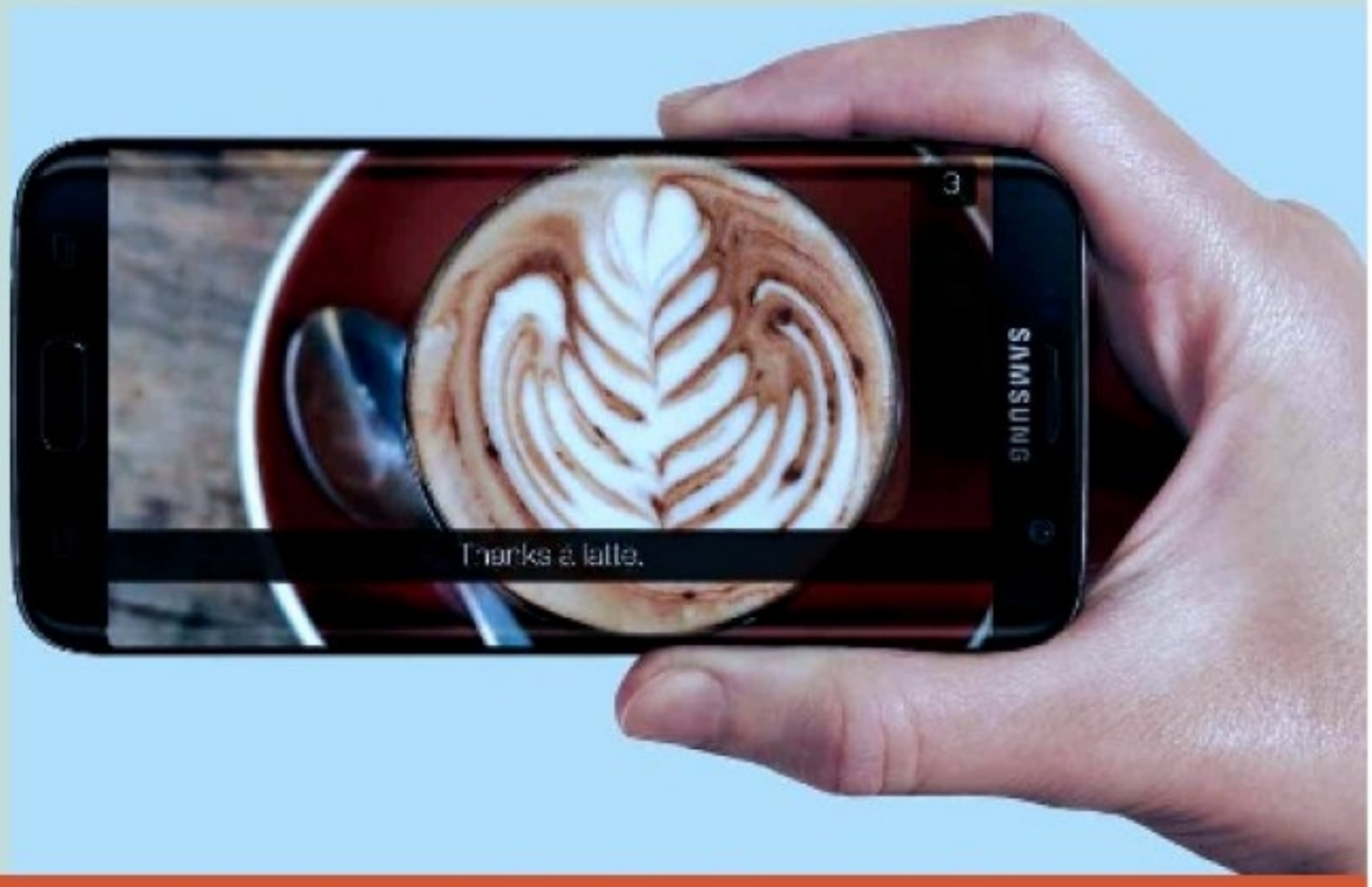

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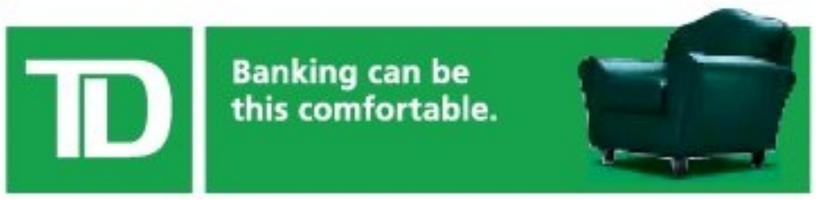

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Millions of refugees have no schools: UN

REPORT

Only 50% have access to education

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees report, only 50 per cent of refugee children around the world have access to primary school education. CONTRIBUTED

More than half of the 6 million refugee children under the mandate of the United Nations have no access to school just as the refugee school-age population is exploding by 600,000 a year, a new report says.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees report, only 50 per cent of refugee children around the world have access to primary school education, compared with a global average of more than 90 per cent.

As these unschooled children grow older, the gap becomes even more startling: only 22 per cent of refugee teens go to high school compared to 84 per cent globally and just 1 per cent attend university, compared to 34 per cent around the world.

"By educating tomorrow's leaders, be they engineers, poets, doctors, scientists, philosophers or computer programmers, we are giving refugees the intellectual tools to shape the future," says the 48-page report to be released in Geneva Thursday. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

TECHNOLOGY

Teenager in Germany appeals to Apple with hijab emoji

Rebecca Williams
Metro | Toronto

Rayouf Alhumedhi wants Muslim represented in emoji-form. CONTRIBUTED

A Muslim teen is asking Apple to create an emoji of a woman wearing a hijab to better represent "millions of women across the globe."

Apple announced a slew of new emojis aimed at being more diverse gender-wise, including women weightlifting, swimming and donning a construction hat.

But for 15-year-old Rayouf Alhumedhi, the lack of representation for Muslim women was a glaring omission.

The Saudi teen, who lives in Germany, has already written a proposal to push Apple for the new emoji with the help of tech insiders, including Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian.

"Roughly 500 million Muslim women on this earth pride themselves on wearing the hijab," reads the proposal addressed to Apple CEO Tim Cook and Unicode, the body in charge of approving changes to the emoji library.

"With this enormous number of people, not a single space on the keyboard is reserved for them."

The teen took to Reddit Tuesday for an "Ask Me Anything," where she opened up about what wearing the hijab means for her and about how her life has changed since moving to Germany.

"Might seem baffling, but when I wear the headscarf I actually feel liberated because I'm in control of what I want to cover," she writes.

IN BRIEF

Doctor declares Clinton 'fit to serve' as president

Hillary Clinton is "recovering well" from pneumonia and remains "fit to serve as President of the United States," her doctor said in a letter released Wednesday by her campaign.

Clinton's physician, Dr. Lisa Bardackseen, says Clinton is "recovering well" and "continues to remain healthy and fit to serve as President of the United States."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Thursday, September 15, 2016

CHANTAL HÉBERT ON AN EX-PM'S ILL-ADVISED ADVICE

For pipeline proponents, recent developments offer an opportunity to once again try to prod Trudeau himself into action. Mulroney, for one, should know better than to flog that particular horse.

Once in a blue moon, or maybe a bit more often than that, someone who should know better offers the prime minister of the day some strikingly flawed advice.

Such is the case of Brian Mulroney's recommendation that Justin Trudeau personally take charge of the controversial Energy East pipeline file.

In a speech in Calgary this week, the former Tory prime minister offered his successful negotiation of a watershed free-trade agreement with the United States in the late 1980s as the template Trudeau should borrow to advance TransCanada's pipeline plan.

"What we now need for an exceptional, cohesive effort to make the most of our resource base is a similarly clear commitment from the top, led by the prime minister, with a unique, high-quality organizational structure drawing expertise from across Canada, and a genuine partnership that will spearhead expansion of our resources, expedite infrastructure construction and bolster a broader diversification of our resources," the former Tory prime minister told his Alberta audience.

It should be said at the outset that this is advice offered in good faith. At a time when most were still sneering at the notion that Trudeau could become prime minister, Mulroney was talking up his potential.

As opposed to other prominent Energy East backers — such as former Quebec premier Jean Charest who was at one point on contract as a consultant to TransCanada — Mulroney has no financial connection to the project. (He does toil in a law firm that, like its competition, is always on the lookout for more energy industry clients.)

Mulroney is not the first to call on Trudeau to jump in front of the pipeline parade and, given the travails of the National Energy Board in dealing with Energy East, he will not be the last.

On Friday the three-member NEB panel tasked with vetting the plan to link the oilsands to the Atlantic coast belatedly recused itself amidst enduring questions as to its independence.

In hindsight, that should have happened as soon as news surfaced earlier this summer of private meetings between panel members and parties such as Charest, whose interests were vested in the project.

The next panel will be made up of members hand-picked by the Trudeau government rather than legacy Conservative appointees. That should go some way to restore credibility to the process. Further down the road, it would make a pro-Energy East NEB recommendation harder for Trudeau to dismiss.

But for pipeline proponents, the latest developments also offer an opportunity to once again try to prod Trudeau himself into action. Mulroney, for one, should know better than to flog that particular horse.

The current prime minister does have an enviable amount of political capital. But then, so did former Quebec premier Lucien Bouchard when he took on the role of chief lobbyist for the shale gas industry in Quebec a few years ago. Not only did Bouchard fail to advance the argument, he also left a lot of his credibility on the battlefield.

TAKE IT FROM HIM Former prime minister Brian Mulroney has said Justin Trudeau should take a lesson from the free-trade negotiations with the U.S. in the late '80s and assume leadership on the oilsands-pipeline file. LARRY MCDOUGAL/THE CANADIAN PRESS

If there is one former prime minister who should know the limits of a top-down policy consensus, it's Mulroney.

And then, the dynamics of a top-down prime ministerial effort to rally support for a pipeline in the name of nation-building would be more akin to the ill-fated constitutional rounds that took place on Mulroney's watch than to the trade negotiations that led to the FTA and NAFTA.

If there is one former prime minister who should know the limits of the persuasive powers of a top-down policy consensus, it should be Mulroney. He and his government succeeded twice in securing unanimous provincial support for two successive constitutional accords.

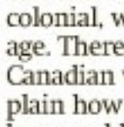
Within a year of the negotiation of the Meech Lake accord in 1987, premiers of a different constitutional persuasion had replaced Mulroney's allies in New Brunswick and Manitoba. And no amount of establishment support from virtually every quarter of Canadian society could salvage the subsequent Charlottetown accord from the fury of voters.

Back when Mulroney and the premiers set out to proactively redress Quebec's constitutional grievances, the sovereignty movement was at low ebb. These days it is similarly at a loss for an issue with enough popular traction to restore its momentum.

Anyone who is close to the Quebec scene can testify that a show of federal force on Energy East could be the answer to the sovereigntist prayers for optimal conditions for a return to power of a majority Parti Québécois government and — perhaps in time — another shot at referendum.

Chantal Hébert is a national affairs writer. Her column appears in Metro on Thursdays.

Suspicion of immigrants is a Canadian value



Desmond Cole

Conservative MP and party leadership contender Kellie Leitch doesn't really want a conversation on Canadian values.

The callous Leitch, who has been insisting lately that we consider a values test for prospective immigrants, simply wants to boost her brand by playing to racist and xenophobic fears of some Conservative party supporters. Modern conservative groups keep questioning immigrants' values because they know their liberal political opponents, who are prone to the same prejudiced scapegoating, will struggle to condemn them.

Many have called Leitch's proposal impractical, since no one person or group can define Canadian values. That's a nice idea, but we know the values our politicians attempt to sell us are a reflection of our colonial, white, British heritage. There are such things as Canadian values, and they explain how our politicians have been peddling a fear of foreigners for the last 150 years.

Suspicion of all immigrants who are not white, or are not members of the former British Empire, is a Canadian value. Canada's founding prime minister, John A. Macdonald, argued that Chinese immigrants to Canada were unfit to vote because they exhibited "no British instincts or British feelings or aspirations." Macdonald didn't need to cloak the authority of the state in the language of wanting a "conversation" about immigrants; in his time, there was no conversation to be had.

Assurances that we no longer live in the 19th century are beside the point. Every politician from Macdonald to Leitch has been able to bank on significant support by distinguishing between British or Canadian values and those of everyone else. Yes, even many newer immigrants echo these suspicions of outsiders' customs or beliefs. They may hail from countries that our government is wary of. The pressure on these newcomers to conform — to validate the wisdom of the system that chose them, to scrutinize those who come after them — must be overwhelming.

Leitch may not win her leadership contest, but the fact her naked appeal to prejudice can still spur "debate" in this country says it all. Polls suggest a majority of Canadians agree with Leitch's call to screen immigrants for good values. Few of us really care about the content of the questionnaire. What we care about is our very Canadian right to demand that immigrants be scrutinized against the comfort and well-being of those already established here.

Conservatives are more likely to support the traditional dominant values openly. It was Leitch who announced a 2015 Conservative campaign proposal to create a "barbaric cultural practices hotline." Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who has cast himself as being far more progressive on immigration and cultural issues, had little to say about the Macarthyist snitch line — Trudeau and his party had quietly voted in favour of a Conservative law called the "Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act" only four months before the election.

Desmond Cole is a journalist based in Toronto

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Penguin Random House to release Zayn Malik autobiography on Nov. 1

The family that reads together

PUBLISHING

Young readers get their own editions of popular titles

Genna Buck
Metro Canada

B.C. author Tilar J. Mazzeo's latest book, Irena's Children, is the high-adventure tale of Irena Sendler, a "female Oskar Schindler." The Polish social worker rescued 2,500 mostly Jewish children during the Second World War by hiding them in coffins and smuggling them through Warsaw's sewers, with help from her network of resourceful teenagers.

But none of that was what Mazzeo's tweenage stepson was most interested in.

"His favourite was the part about Irena Sendler's dog," Mazzeo said. "It's interesting what kids pick up on — the idea that the dog helped, by barking to distract the Germans."

Irena's Children is coming out Sept. 27 in two distinct versions simultaneously, one for adults and one for young readers 10 and up. That's the one her stepson devoured.

Her work is part of a trend: Publishers are adapting adult titles — both backlisted books and new ones like Mazzeo's — for younger audiences.

It's a strategy to squeeze more revenue out of a single title, and to respond to the demand for good books, especially non-fiction, for middle-grade readers.

"That nine to 12 age is super hard," said Kelly Jensen, an editor at Book Riot and former children's librarian. "You have reluctant readers, and some kids who are super eager readers," whose teachers and parents might not want them browsing the YA shelves just yet, Jensen said.

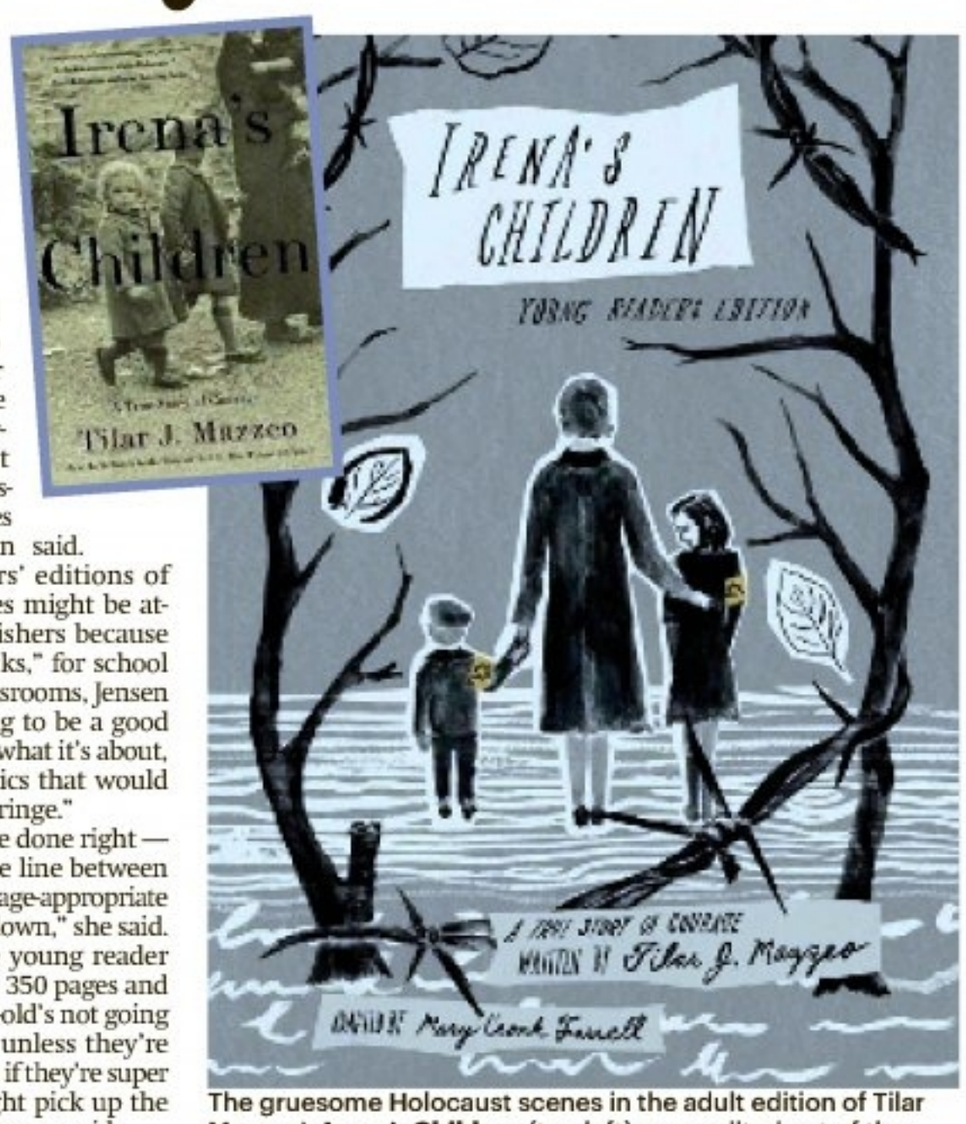
Young readers' editions of well-known titles might be attractive to publishers because they're "safe picks," for school libraries and classrooms, Jensen added. "It's going to be a good story, you know what it's about, without the topics that would make a parent cringe."

But it has to be done right — and there's a fine line between making material age-appropriate and "dumbing down," she said.

"I look at the young reader editions that are 350 pages and think, 'A 10-year-old's not going to pick that up unless they're super into it. And if they're super into it, they might pick up the adult version," Jensen said.

Mazzeo, author of Irena's Children, was happy with how her young readers' edition turned out. She adapted it with help from Mary Cronk Farrell, who has extensive experience in YA.

"Part of it is to encourage families to read together," Mazzeo said. "The parents can read the grown-up version and children can read the young readers edition. And you can have conversations about important ethical, moral and historical subjects."



The gruesome Holocaust scenes in the adult edition of Tilar Mazzeo's **Irena's Children** (top left) were edited out of the adaptation for young readers (above). CONTRIBUTED

The scenes of violence against children were, naturally, left out of the kids' edition. It's not always clear, though, when adaptation tips over into censorship.

For example, Sendler's affair with a married man is a key plot point in Irena's Children, but in the young-reader version the character is just her friend.

"I'm not totally sure, personally, we needed to edit that out," Mazzeo said. "But ... some people would not want their children reading about marital infidelity."

> **Children can read the young readers' edition, and you can have conversations about important ethical, moral and historical subjects.**
> Tilar J. Mazzeo

"The bigger point was you would not want a child *not* reading a story about something really heroic that happened in the Second World War simply because of that issue."

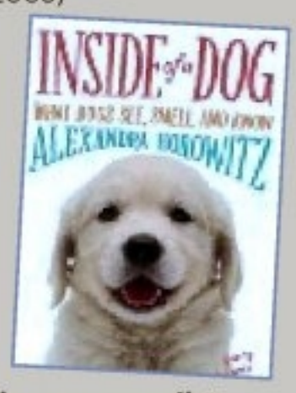
Cognitive scientist Alexandra Horowitz faced a similar challenge while adapting her 2009 bestseller Inside of a Dog.

She pushed to keep technical words like "umwelt" — a term for the internal world of a dog. New concepts are an important part of getting excited about a book, Horowitz said. "I've had good feedback so far. Children are torturing their parents with that word."

READ IT

Adult titles that have been adapted for kids

- I am Malala: Young readers edition
  Malala Yousafzai (2014)
- Inside of a Dog: Young readers edition
  Alexandra Horowitz (2016)
- Far from the Tree, young young readers edition, Andrew Solomon (forthcoming in 2017)
- The Omnivore's Dilemma: Young Readers Edition Michael Pollan (2009)



Big-name novelists getting in on the trend

- Unbroken, Young readers edition
  Laura Hillenbrand (forthcoming in 2017)
- Da Vinci Code, the YA Adaptation
  Dan Brown (2016)

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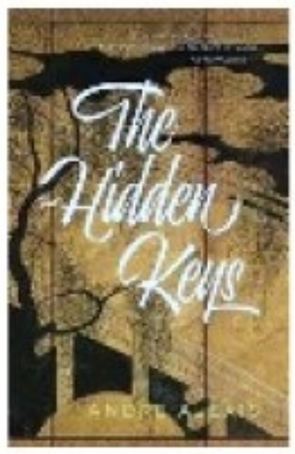
Curl up with these books

New books are dropping on our desk like falling leaves; there are so many good reads to curl up with, but some stand out. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

SEPT. 19

Andre Alexis, The Hidden Keys

In 2015, Alexis won the Scotiabank Giller Prize for his novel Fifteen Dogs. This newest is the third in the series of five — a quincunx — where he turns standard story constructs on their head. In this one he was inspired by reading Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island, so there is, indeed, a buried treasure of sorts and a cast of characters who go to great lengths to find it.



SEPT. 27

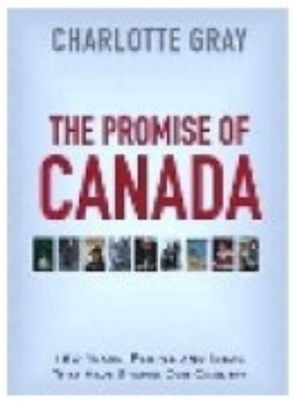
Marni Jackson, Don't I Know You

Marni Jackson is familiar to so many Canadian readers through her journalism; now she's written her first novel, a trip through generations of celebrities via one character, Rose McEwan, whose life from the age of 17 is peppered with cameos from Meryl Streep, Neil Young and Leonard Cohen.

OCT. 18

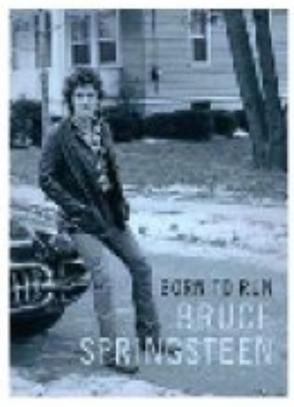
Charlotte Gray, The Promise of Canada

As Canada gets set for its 150th birthday next year, historian and biographer Charlotte Gray takes a look at the people who helped shape the country. Another worthy contribution to the celebrations is comedian Mike Meyers.



SEPT. 27

Bruce Springsteen, Born to Run

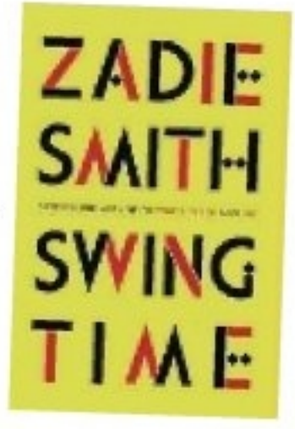


He has spent the last seven years working on his autobiography, according to his publisher. And in it he gives fans everything they are hoping to discover: stories about his New Jersey childhood, seeing Elvis on the Ed Sullivan Show, his bar band days; he wanted to "show the reader his mind."

NOV. 15

Zadie Smith, Swing Time

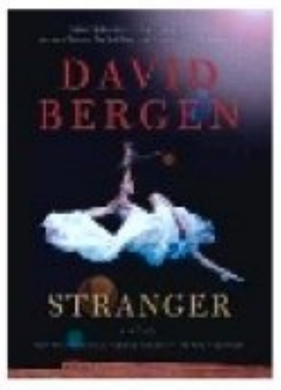
U.K. writer Zadie Smith's new novel is about two friends who dream of being dancers; one of them has talent and one doesn't, but they both pursue their dreams with much different outcomes. Smith's novels tend to cause a stir: her debut White Teeth came out to acclaim and On Beauty won the Orange prize.



OCT. 25

Stranger, David Bergen

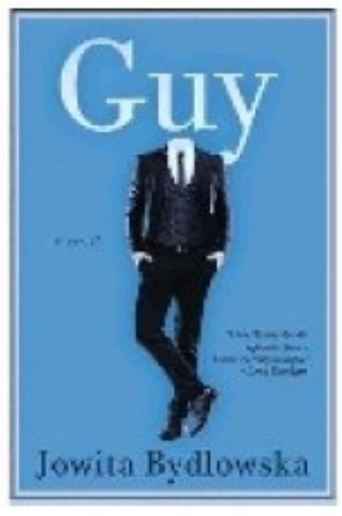
This is a timely story — a young Guatemalan woman working at a fertility clinic becomes pregnant by the American doctor there; the child is taken from her to the U.S., which she enters illegally in an effort to find her. This powerful novel takes a look at wealth, poverty and dislocation.



NOV. 1

Jowita Bydlowska, Guy

This darkly funny book gets you from the first page — where Guy introduces women not by their names but by how he rates them: as a four-and-a-half, or a one. The idea is to take a look at a misogynist guy from his point of view, and provide some biting social commentary along the way.



Ryan Gosling on fame and all that jazz

LA LA LAND

Canadian actor reflects on his own success in L.A.

Steve Gow
For Metro Canada

Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone are two artists trying to chase their dreams in L.A. CONTRIBUTED

Ryan Gosling should become an annual fixture at the Toronto International Film Festival. After all, he's premiered such hits as Blue Valentine and Drive here, and now that the London, Ont.-born actor is back, he's once again brought a certain buzz to the city.

"It's great to come home," said Gosling, gazing out the window of a top floor in the Ritz-Carlton hotel.

"I left Canada so I could make movies in Los Angeles so it feels good to bring those movies home."

This latest film must feel particularly pleasing for him to present to Canada.

After all, it's about his adopted home, Los Angeles — where he moved when he was merely 16 and since found monumental movie stardom.

An audacious musical about the romance between an aspiring jazz musician and an impassioned actress (Emma Stone), La La Land has been turning heads with its catchy musical numbers and big-screen charm.

But amongst the spectacle, Gosling should also be singled out for learning jazz piano prior to filming.

> **I didn't have any real frame of reality (so) in my mind it was possible.**
>
> Ryan Gosling on arriving in L.A. when he was 16 years old, to pursue an acting career

"I dove right in — I always wanted to play piano and what an opportunity to spend three months with a great tutor playing music that you like," said Gosling, who admits to having lost his chops since.

"Some of the pieces I could still play but jazz is very, very difficult."

The musical, which has been enchanting Toronto audiences and finding itself on the top of many critics' Oscar-favourite lists, balances fantastic set pieces with themes of risk and rejection, elements every struggling actor in Hollywood knows well — except maybe the 35-year-old thespian.

"I didn't know any better," recalled Gosling of his early ambition in Tinseltown.

"I didn't have any real frame of reality (so) in my mind it was possible.

"If I had gone later in life, I don't know if I would've gone.

"But I certainly don't think I would've put myself out there in the way I did."

While the Oscar-nominee credits his conviction for success in showbiz, he admits it's not always been an easy ride. Even with the luck he's had, Gosling still feels every role is a risk.

"It's always a crap-shoot," said Gosling. "Although with this I have to say that it felt like if it was as fun to watch as it was to make, we would have something that worked."

TIFF MIDNIGHT MADNESS

Filmgoers pass out at screening of Raw

Rebecca Williams
Metro | Toronto

Raw, a 'cannibalistic coming of age' film, was so gory some audience members fainted, according to a TIFF exec. CONTRIBUTED

Even those who love gory movies have their limits, and it seems a tale of a "cannibalistic coming of age" is one movie some found hard to stomach.

Paramedics were called to the Ryerson Theatre early Tuesday morning after multiple audience members passed out during a midnight screening of the cannibal film Raw.

"An ambulance had to be called to the scene as the film became too much for a couple of patrons," film festival exec Ryan Werner told the Hollywood Reporter.

The French-Belgian film from director Julia Ducournau premiered at a Midnight Madness screening, known for featuring intense thrillers and graphic horror movies.

It seems Raw fit the bill.

Of course, there are some questioning whether the fainting film festers were legitimate or planted in the theatre by a very creative marketing team.

On Twitter, @AWolfeful wrote 'I hope some marketing genius paid these people to pass out...'

According to the film festival website, Raw tells the tale of a vegetarian veterinary student who "develops an insatiable lust for flesh as the result of a gruesome hazing ritual."

The film has been one of the more buzzed-about movies at the festival since it won a critics' prize at the Cannes Film Festival back in May.

Interested in catching the film?

Raw has one more screening at the TIFF Bell Lightbox on Saturday, Sept. 17.

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Top: Charlie & Lee focuses on fashion made by local designers; ceramics from local artisans like Maggie Boyd. Below: linens find a home next to cool slides.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY REBECCA MCCOLGAN

#YVR INDEX

The Kit Compact—Canada's fave beauty and style brand—checks out Vancouver's hottest style destinations

THE ADDRESS:
CHARLIE & LEE, 223 UNION ST.

Kleah Graham Michnik has one of the best eyes for fashion in the city. As the owner of Charlie & Lee, she curates cool indie labels that are ethically sourced and made in North America. We sat down with her to talk style, inspo and VanCity cool.

Which brands are you most excited about this fall? "I'd say Black Crane and Ilana Kohn, because I would wear almost every single piece in each collection. Both brands are solid, simple and focused on fit with easy-to-wear, high-quality fabrics. They are sure of their style, and I respect anyone who has a very clear and uncompromising vision."

How do you discover the designers you carry? "Down the wormhole of style research, which is a specialty of mine. I find a lot of our designers through Instagram, through travel and people contacting me via email. As the mom of a wild toddler, I really don't have the luxury to sit and read magazines."

What's your fave Vancouver brand? "To name just a few: Maggie Boyd Ceramics, Penny Frances Apothecary and these epic linen blankets from Le Fil Rouge. Vancouver is full of crazy talent." *—Kiara Schwartz*

THE MUST-DO: #vfw

Vancouver Fashion Week—which runs September 19 to 25 and features more than 60 shows—is like boot camp for the style set. To prepare, swing by the Juice Truck (28 W. 5th Ave.) and swig the gingery Kickstarter. Then check out our VFW must-sees: Lee Atelier, Angela Lee's line of artfully deconstructed separates; Viktoria Tisza, who has designed bodysuits for Beyoncé (NBD); and Seattle-based New-York-made label Schai.

Collections by Lee Atelier (left) and Viktoria Tisza. COURTESY OF VANCOUVER FASHION WEEK

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FROM THE EDITORS OF THE KIT compact

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BRINGING SEXY BACK WITH BRITNEY? A musical reunion between **Justin Timberlake** and **Britney Spears** could be in the works after the singer said he's up for collaborating with his ex. Spears said "Justin Timberlake is very good" last month while discussing who she would like to work with. When informed of Spears' comments, Timberlake told E! News on Tuesday at the premiere of his Netflix concert documentary in Toronto that he "absolutely" would like to work with her, adding "I'm accessible, give us a call." LIZ BEDDALL/FOR METRO

Miley Cyrus announces her red-carpet revolt

INTERVIEW

Star says when people are starving, walk feels like a 'skit'

Singer and actress Miley Cyrus hasn't walked a red carpet since December. GETTY IMAGES

If a celebrity doesn't walk a red carpet, are they still a celebrity?

In the next phase of her career, that's the bold question Miley Cyrus will face after her unprecedented vow to "never do a red carpet again."

With Hollywood's awards season kicking off at Sunday's Primetime Emmys, will other celebs sidestep the frenzy and follow Cyrus off the carpet? In show business, such a daring declaration could have implications beyond what's beneath those designer heels.

In recent years, media shenanigans on red carpets have prompted push-back from A-listers Julianne Moore, Reese Witherspoon and Jennifer Aniston.

Last awards season, they opted against sticking their well-manicured and bejeweled hands in front of E!'s "mani-cam," while younger actresses like Jena Malone and Elizabeth Moss publicly mocked the paw parade.

Cyrus last appearance on a red carpet was back in December at the premiere of the Netflix film A Very Murray Christmas. Cyrus ominously captioned an Instagram photo of herself posing on it: "(hashtag)mylastredcarpet4eva." Apparently, she meant it.

"I had to do the premiere, and I will never do a red carpet again," the singer-actress said in the October issue of Elle magazine, out Wednesday. "Why, when people are starving, am I on a carpet that's red? Because I'm 'important'? Because I'm 'famous'? That's not how I roll. It's like a skit — it's like Zoolander."

Stacy Jones, president of entertainment marketing agency Hollywood Branded, said stars who shun the red carpet lose fame and fortune. She expects Cyrus, who is appearing as a coach on the latest season of the NBC singing competition The Voice and starring in the upcoming Amazon series Crisis in Six Scenes, will likely miss out on future roles and deals because of her decision.

"It's part of the job," said Jones. "In today's world, when you sign up to be a celebrity, you're singing up to be in the limelight. You're going to be in gossip columns and have paparazzi follow you. You will have fans idolize you. It's damaging to your career." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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9	3	7	8	1	5	6	4	2
6	8	1	7	2	4	3	9	5
4	2	5	9	3	6	1	8	7
3	7	2	5	8	1	9	6	4
8	1	4	6	9	2	5	7	3
5	9	6	4	7	3	8	2	1

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Home sweet realistic first home

MORTGAGE BROKERS

Find out what you can afford before you go house hunting

Jason Menard

For first-time home buyers, information is key — but having the right information can make all the difference.

"A good number of first-time home buyers will look at the marketplace first then go to a broker," explained Paul Taylor, president and CEO of Mortgage Professionals Canada. "There may be a disconnect between what they want and what they can afford."

Instead, it may be more beneficial for new home buyers to determine what they can afford — and make a realistic plan based on existing debt and contingencies. Taylor said brokers can help in that process.

"Generally, people will make assumptions on the amount of debt that they're comfortable with and able to afford," he said. "A broker will walk you through your debt — student loans, credit card debt — and provide you with a realistic price range."

Jonathan Rotondo, senior media relations officer, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, pointed to the 2015 First-Time Homebuyers Survey, which showed that first-time buyers are not as confident as repeat buyers, have a lower understanding of mortgage options, and were more likely to find the process challenging. They tend to turn to brokers and lenders for advice (more than 70 per cent) — and getting that help improves their success.

First-time home buyers improve their success if they turn to brokers and lenders for advice, according to a 2015 survey. ISTOCK

> **There may be a disconnect between what first-time home buyers want and what they can afford**
> Paul Taylor, president and CEO of Mortgage Professionals Canada

"Overall, our survey indicated that most first-time buyers [78 per cent] are satisfied with their experience," Rotondo explained. "Advice from mortgage professionals can be of great help to first-time buyers, and help increase their level of understanding of mortgage options and satisfaction with their mortgage professional.

"For example, providing advice on long-term mortgage strategies can increase their level of understanding of the mortgage options available by up to 83 per cent, and their level of satisfaction with their mortgage professional by up to 85 per cent."

In addition to improving satisfaction, Taylor added that turning to professionals for your first time can help improve the bottom line.

"This will sound biased because of my position, but mortgage brokers really do save Canadians money," he said. "I don't expect everyone to believe me and I understand skepticism, but I encourage everyone to explore their options when it comes to mortgages."

+ TECHNOLOGY

Use apps and calculators to boost expert advice

With today's technology, the power to buy a home is literally in the palm of your hand. But mobile applications and calculators should be used to help support the process — not be the be all and end all.

Mortgage calculators and apps are a useful tool to help in the home buying and mortgage shopping process. However, they should be used in tandem with advice from financial and mortgage professionals," explained Jonathan Rotondo, senior media relations officer, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. "Most banks and financial institutions offer calculators or apps.

"Given this decision-making process is personal and based on an individual's particular and unique situation, it really comes down to finding and using the tools that best fit your needs." JASON MENARD

Reviewing your mortgage is good for financial health. ISTOCK

HOUSING FINANCE

Tend mortgage options to encourage financial growth

Getting a mortgage can be stressful, which is why many tend to not want to continually revisit the process. However, there may be benefits to you if you look at mortgage maintenance as a vital part of your financial health.

"The majority of people probably do just set it and forget it," explained Paul Taylor, president and CEO of Mortgage Professionals Canada. "We recommend always looking at options."

There may be value in talking to a broker or lender to see if there are other options available. If you have a mortgage with a higher interest rate than the current rate, it may be worthwhile to look at changing the terms of your mortgage — even if there are fees or penalties.

Some people also look at paying down mortgages earlier, but Taylor said that may or may not be the right choice.

"It's really about individual circumstances," he said, adding that there's a bit of a generational divide in that more mature mortgage holders tend to prioritize paying down their mortgage, whereas younger home owners tend to have a higher threshold for debt tolerance. Regardless, he said it's important to get the right information when making a decision.

"Is it better to pay more on your mortgage, or take those extra funds — if you have them — and invest elsewhere? That's very much up to the individual and their situation," he said. "It's important to get expert advice — whether that's from a financial advisor or a broker — to make a decision that's right for you."

Jonathan Rotondo, senior media relations officer, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, said it's important to make informed housing finance decisions.

"Take the time to plan and review your mortgage options, terms and conditions and prepare yourself for managing your mortgage," he said. "Consider a lesser mortgage amount than the maximum you can afford; evaluate the impact of an increasing interest rate on your monthly payment; plan to be mortgage free faster and create a 'cushion' in case of unforeseen financial difficulties; and seek help if you have difficulty making your mortgage payments."

This also extends to those looking at using home equity to pay down debt or reinvest into their homes. "A broker will work with you to walk through the options based upon your own life circumstances," Taylor added.

JASON MENARD

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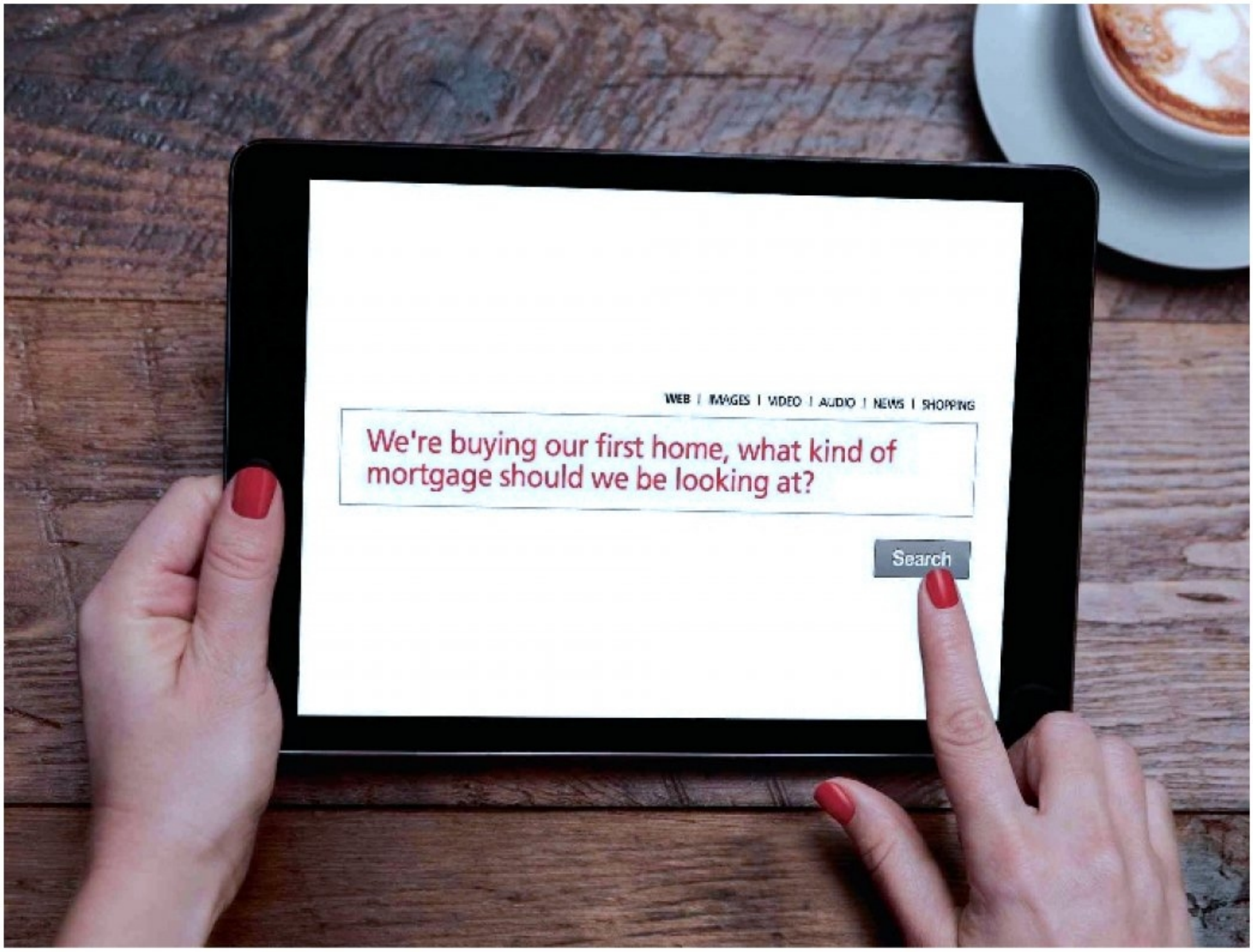

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metro HOME

Your essential daily news

Kim and Kanye currently staying in $24.5 million U.S. Tribeca penthouse

MEET THE CONDO

High ceilings, natural light

CONTRIBUTED

Project overview

Edward by Mosaic Homes is a collection of one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments at King Edward and Yukon Street, just east of Cambie Village. This project is currently in the pre-construction phase and will have 51 homes in two four-storey towers. Sales will start this fall.

Housing amenities

Edward will boast 10-foot-high ceilings that maximize volume, storage and interior design possibilities. Each home will be filled with plenty of natural light thanks to the eight-foot-high, double-wide picture windows. Residents can enjoy an outdoor shared amenity space, which features an urban garden.

Location and transit

Edward is conveniently located beside the King Edward SkyTrain station, which links residents to downtown Vancouver and the airport. There are also a number of bus routes that run up and down Cambie Street.

In the neighbourhood

Located in the established yet transforming hub of Cambie Village, these homes will have walkable access to Queen Elizabeth Park and Hill Crest Community Centre. The trendy Mount Pleasant neighbourhood is next door — a great place for shopping, dining and sitting back with a coffee.

NEED TO KNOW

What: Edward
Builder: Mosaic Homes
Designer: Cristina Oberti
Location: Vancouver
Building: Condominium
Sizes:
From 566 square feet to 1,727 square feet
Model: One-, two- and three-bedroom options
Pricing: To be determined
Status: Under construction
Occupancy: Fall/winter 2018
Sales centre: 498 West 41st Ave., Vancouver
Phone: 604-325-2216
Website: mosaichomes.com/edward

GARDENING

Plant bulbs now for spring blooms

It's nearly that time of year when gardeners think of spring — of planting bulbs that are going to bloom then.

Bulbs are "pre-packaged" flowers, so a green thumb isn't necessary to get those first season's blossoms. Still, a few tips for buying and planting bulbs can make for a better show next spring and beyond.

The bigger the bulbs, the bigger next spring's flowers.

Bulbs are usually sold as small, medium or top size, the measurement taken around the circumference where the bulb is fattest. Which measurements go with which size depends on the kind of bulb. Small tulips are 10 to 11 centimetres around, medium ones 11 to 12 centimetres, and anything larger is top size.

Naturally smaller bulbs include certain tulips, such as the charming waterlily tulip, as well as grape hyacinth, crocus and snow drop.

Over time, with good care, smaller bulbs will grow into larger ones, whose show will match that of the initially fatter bulbs. One way to compensate for smaller flowers would be to plant more of them, putting your money into buying more rather than fatter bulbs. Which brings us to ...

More is better, for any kind of bulb. Forget about planting tulips in a single file ready to march like soldiers down the edge of your front path. Instead, plan for big dollops of colour, massing bulbs in circular groups or, for bolder visual effect from fewer bulbs, triangular groupings with an apex directed to your vantage point.

Even though this coming spring's flowers are already packaged inside bulbs, the more sunlight the plants bask in, the better will be the show they put on in years to come. The spot where you plant bulbs doesn't have to be bathed in sunlight all season — only until the bulbs' leaves disappear. Those leaves disappear, fortuitously, at about the same time that emerging leaves of deciduous trees finally knit together to create cool shade.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Over time, spring flowering bulbs can multiply to the point of becoming overcrowded, at which time they need to be dug up, separated, and replanted. LEE REICH VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Creating a cocktail-party friendly space

DECOR

Entertaining is easy with the right setup

Vicky Sanderson
For Torstar News Service

Pick comfy seating but not too comfy — you don't want you guests passing out on the couch after a cocktail or three. ISTOCK

Television shows such as Downton Abbey have fuelled a more formal approach to pre-dinner drinks, while others, such as Mad Men, have helped revive the cocktail party. Whatever your style, it's easy to carve out a space that can accommodate cocktails for a small crowd or tippling tête-à-têtes with a special friend.

Any corner of a den, rec room or family room can be designated for drinks. It's also easy to define a cocktail area with a room divider, such as shelving. Shelves have the added advantage of allowing you to easily switch up décor and accessories seasonally. In summer, for example, stacked shelves filled with plants create an outdoorsy feel.

In a small-footprint space, consider making a bar cart do double duty. When not in use for drinks, it may sit in the narrow front hall of a condo, as a spot to hold purses, mail, keys and electronic devices. In a bedroom, it can serve as an everyday perch for lotions, perfume and jewelry.

Soft and indirect lighting is conducive to conversation and cocktails. Consider installing a dimmer switch on an overhead light in the area. LED strings can be threaded through indoor plants, either faux or real, or nestled in a bowl for pretty accent lighting.

Any space designed to encourage conversation will revolve around seating. Choose something comfortable with slim arms and legs that's not overly deep, wide or cushiony. The combination of those three elements with the effects of a martini or three, could turn the before-dinner drinks into naptime.

Toss cushions add comfort and colour. When shopping for them, don't forget to look in the patio department of mass merchants such as Lowe's, which this year has a lovely selection of high-quality patterned cushions that work indoors or out.

Ideally, each seat should be within easy reach of a piece of furniture on which a glass can rest.

If that's not doable, add cocktail tables, or a firm ottoman with a tray placed on top.

Cut the need to run back and forth from the kitchen by using a console with concealed storage that can hold small plates, napkins and glasses, such as a sleek teak piece from Artemano's new Intan line.

Compact but prettily proportioned, it gives a nod to mid-century modern design without looking kitschy, and it plays nicely with contemporary soft furnishings.

As we move closer toward fall, retailers will bring in more and more cocktail ware.

This season, go for the gold: HomeSense, for example, is selling cocktail shakers, jiggers and swizzle sticks in various gold shades, from matte bronze to pink-tinged tones. All work well with vintage china or small plates in black or crisp white.

In small spaces, opt for a foldable wine-cooling sleeve that can be stored in the freezer. Trudeau's Maison line has an attractive, colourful sleeve that cools a bottle in just five minutes.

Look, too, for coasters and accessories that feature agate, or which mimic the look, as stone motifs are expected to come on strong over the next several months.

IMPROV

If your budget doesn't run to dedicated serve ware such as an ice bucket, simply fill a pretty bowl or clean, generously sized plant pot with ice and let it do the trick.

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A DIY home project to cheer for

CRAFTING

This pompom blanket is cute and practical

Pompom blankets are a classic find in the souks of Morocco. Celebrated for their handcrafted woven beauty, you'll also spot them in an endless stream of Instagram-worthy spaces.

Whether they're used as a traditional bedspread or as a cozy throw to curl up with on the sofa, it's easy to craft your own version using do-it-yourself pompoms and a purchased blanket.

Step 1: Gather supplies

We used super bulky yarn for this project. The advantage of this type of yarn is that it can result in a larger, fluffier pompom in less time.

It's also easier to separate the strands of yarn to fluff them out when it is thicker. Two skeins of bulky yarn make approximately 12 pompoms depending on size.

The pompoms are easy to attach to the blanket. If you're using a blanket with an open weave, you won't need the needle and thread. You'll easily be able to tie the pompoms to the edge. If you are using a blanket with a tighter weave, like the blanket we used, you will need to sew the pompom to the blanket.

We used a vintage blanket found at a thrift shop but you can pick up a throw from most home décor retailers.

SUPPLIES

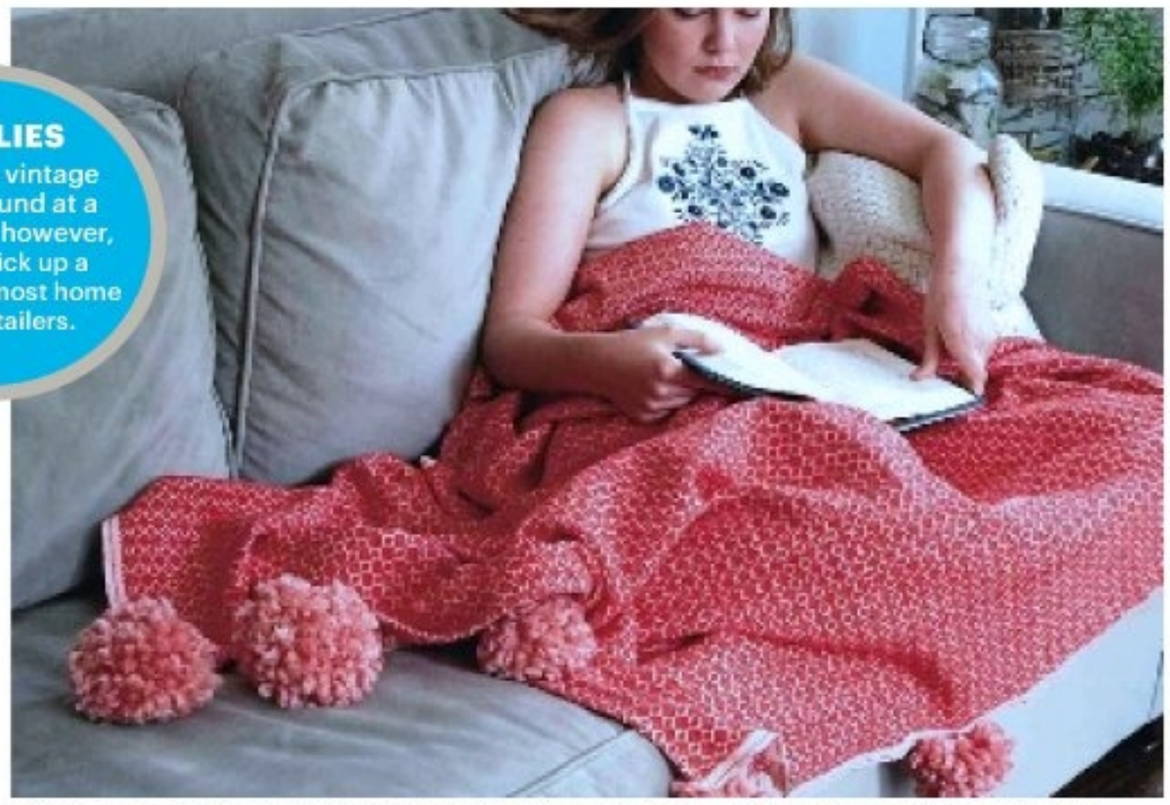
We used a vintage blanket found at a thrift shop, however, you can pick up a throw from most home décor retailers.

You'll need:

- Yarn — super bulky, two skeins
- Scissors
- Blanket or throw
- Cardboard
- Embroidery needle
- Embroidery thread

Step 2: Start wrapping!

We're sharing two ways to make a pompom. The first method uses a piece of cardboard. The second method uses your hand. Cut a piece of cardboard for wrapping the yarn. The wider the piece of cardboard, the larger the pompom will be. Wrap the yarn around the width of the cardboard until you achieve desired thickness. We wrapped the yarn around approximately 30 times. It all depends on thickness of yarn.



Pompom blankets are great to curl up with on the couch — or take it to your freezing office.
DEBRA NORTON/FOR TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Step 3: Tie it up

Cut a piece of yarn long enough to tie around the middle of the wrapped yarn (approximately six inches). Lay the yarn on a table and carefully slide the wound yarn off the cardboard onto the piece of yarn. Tie the piece of yarn around the middle of the wound yarn, very tightly.

Step 4: Make the pompom

Hold the two pieces of loose string from tying the pom-pom. Using sharp scissors, on one side of the pompom, start cutting through the loops of yarn. Repeat on the other side. Ensure all of the loops are cut. Do not cut the loose yarn strings or the yarn holding the pompom together.

Step 5: Fluff and trim

After cutting through all the loops of yarn begin separating the strands and fluffing the pompom. Trim away extra yarn to create a ball. Keep trimming and fluffing the pompom to achieve the desired shape.

Step 6: Attach the pompom

If you are using a blanket with a tight weave you will need to sew the pompom to the blanket. To do this, thread an embroidery needle with embroidery thread. Knot the end of the thread. Thread the needle through the pompom, where it is tied, and sew the pompom to the blanket. If you are using a blanket with an open weave, simply tie the pompom to the blanket. Thread the uncut yarn pieces through an open weave at the edge of the blanket and tie.

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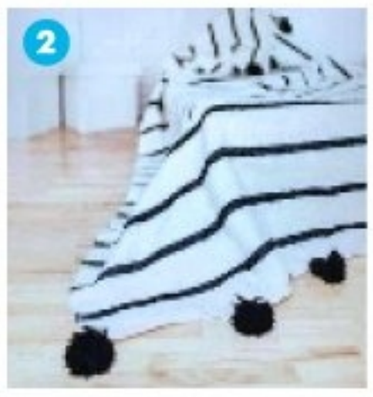

RETAIL

Not feeling crafty? Buy it

Not feeling the desire to pull out your scissors?

We've got you covered with a selection of pompom blankets to give your space a playful edge while avoiding a trip to the craft store.

1 **Baba Souk** This Montreal based shop stocks some of the chicest handmade décor and fashion from Moroccan souks (markets) and independent designers with a Boho spirit.
Rustic Pompom Wool Blanket, Queen Size - Pink
$225/ free shipping
Ready to ship.

2 **Indigo & Lavender** Handcrafted Moroccan pompom blanket available in a variety of sizes.
Antibes, Pompom Blanket
$305 & up/ free shipping
Ready to ship.

3 **Tonic Living** Beautiful hand-loomed Turkish blanket with tassels.
Throw blanket, Milan Red
$120/free shipping
Ready to ship.

4 **Zine Interiors**
Handmade Moroccan Wool throw blankets from a Morocco based Etsy shop.
Pompom Blanket
$276.12, $45.10 shipping
Ready to ship in three to five business days.

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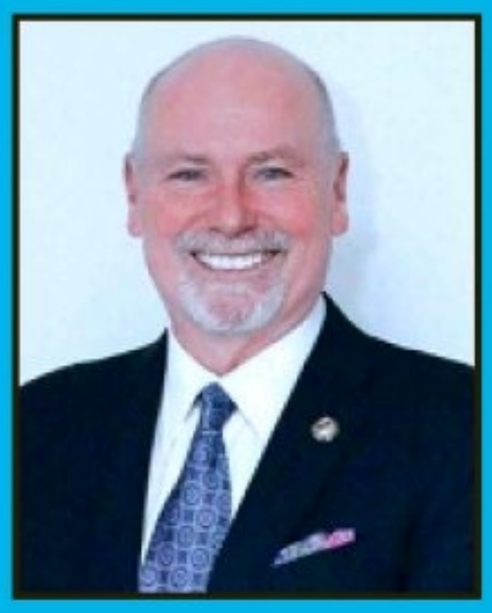

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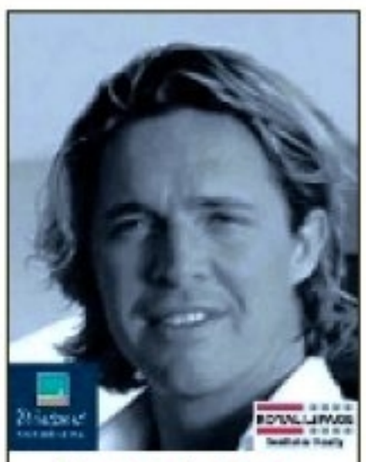

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metro SPORTS

Miami Heat forward Chris Bosh has pronounced himself ready to play after having had each of his last two seasons halted by blood clots

'We're rock bottom'

MLB

Jays suffer 4th straight series loss, say morale is still high

WEDNESDAY In Toronto

8	1
RAYS	BLUE JAYS

Marco Estrada's words were confident and optimistic, but the soft tone of the Toronto right-hander's voice and glum look on his face told a different story as he tried to explain the Blue Jays' recent skid that continued Wednesday with a demoralizing 8-1 loss to the Tampa Bay Rays.

"Our team morale is still high, guys are picking everybody else up every inning," Estrada said following the loss that knocked Toronto down to third place in the American League East.

"It's just hard to explain this," Estrada said, his gaze often finding the floor as TV cameras flashed brightly on his face. "I guess when things are going bad they stay there for a bit. But the good thing is we can only go up from here. I know things are going to change. I know time is running out but things are going to change. We're too good for it not to."

The loss capped a 2-4 stint at Rogers Centre that included a crucial series loss to the Boston Red Sox.

September has been a disaster for the Jays, who opened the month with four series losses for the first time this season. They have won just three of their last 12 games and were 2-1/2 games behind Boston for first place in the AL East after Wednesday's matinee. The Red Sox were to play the second-place Orioles on Wednesday night.

Toronto had held sole possession of the division lead as recently as Sept. 5.

"I've got to believe we're rock bottom," manager John Gibbons said. "I don't see how much lower it can go. So I'm optimistic that this will turn and turn in a hurry."

The Blue Jays will need it to if they hope to make a second straight post-season appearance.

Toronto begins what could be a tough seven-game West Coast road trip Thursday in Los Angeles followed by a three-game stop in Seattle.

The lowly Angels, behind the power of Mike Trout and Albert Pujols, won two of three games against the Jays at Rogers Centre in August. The Mariners, meanwhile, are not far removed from an AL wild-card spot and took two of three at Toronto in July.

Estrada (8-9) dominated the first three innings Wednesday, retiring the first nine Rays he faced and setting a franchise record by opening the game with five straight strikeouts. But as the game wore on, the Blue Jays' struggles began peeking through.

They managed just two hits on the day — matching a season-low — while giving up 13. They failed to score more than three runs for the 21st time in their last 41 games.

Estrada maintained that despite the Blue Jays' current state, no one in the clubhouse has given up — not yet, anyway.

"We're fighting. We're fighting for sure," he said. "I don't think anybody's down. Not yet. But we need to turn this around before anybody does get down." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Blue Jays starting pitcher Marco Estrada and catcher Dioner Navarro couldn't solve the Rays after a dominant first three innings on Wednesday. CARLOS OSORIO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

INJURY UPDATE

Reigning AL MVP **Josh Donaldson** sat out Wednesday's game, his third straight, with a hip injury.

The third baseman had an MRI Wednesday and described the injury as a gradual thing that suddenly intensified.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

WORLD CUP OF HOCKEY

Canada bests Russia in overtime

Ryan Getzlaf beat Sergei Bobrovsky on a breakaway at 3:29 of overtime to lead Team Canada to a 3-2 victory over Team Russia in a World Cup of Hockey exhibition Wednesday night.

Bobrovsky made 45 stops, some of them spectacular, but couldn't wrangle the puck when Getzlaf slipped it between his pads during the 3-on-3 extra session.

WEDNESDAY In Pittsburgh

3	2
CANADA	RUSSIA

John Tavares and Patrice Bergeron scored for Canada. Pittsburgh Penguins star Sidney Crosby assisted on Bergeron's goal while playing on home ice at Consol Energy Center.

Carey Price had 24 saves for Canada, which finished 2-1 in exhibitions before the tournament begins this weekend.

Artemi Panarin had a goal and an assist for the Russians. Alexander Ovechkin also scored. Evgeni Malkin assisted on Ovechkin's goal to match longtime Pittsburgh teammate Crosby.

The Canadians open the tournament Saturday against the Czech Republic, while Russia begins on Sunday against Sweden. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL

Broncos fined for Newton helmet hits

A person with knowledge of the punishment tells The Associated Press that two Denver Broncos defenders have been fined a total of $42,540 — but not suspended — for helmet-to-helmet hits on Cam Newton.

> **My job is to win football games, not lobby for my health.**
> Cam Newton

The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the NFL hasn't announced the fines, said linebacker Brandon Marshall was fined $24,309 and safety Darian Stewart $18,231.

The league's MVP took four helmet-to-helmet shots in the Carolina Panthers' 21-20 loss to Denver, although only one of the hits drew a flag and none resulted in any penalty yardage. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

NHL to introduce concussion monitors

The NHL is revamping concussion monitoring for the upcoming season.

Deputy commissioner Bill Daly says the league will have four concussion spotters watching all games from a centralized location in either Toronto or New York, as well as spotters at each game to check for visible symptoms. Those spotters will have the authority to have players removed from games.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Floro out as coach of men's national soccer team

Canadian soccer has claimed another coaching victim.

The Canadian Soccer Association dumped Benito Floro on Wednesday, opting not to renew his contract in the wake of Canada's most recent failed World Cup qualifying campaign.

Floro inherited a team ranked 88th in the world and 10th in CONCACAF. Canada is currently No. 100 in the world and No. 11 in CONCACAF.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NCAA

North Carolina loses more title contests

The Atlantic Coast Conference has followed the NCAA's lead and is removing all its athletic championships from North Carolina over a state law limiting protections for LGBTQ people.

The ACC Council of Presidents voted Wednesday to relocate the league's championships until North Carolina repeals the law. The decision includes 10 neutral site championships this academic school year, which means relocating the ACC football title game that was scheduled to be played in Charlotte in December.

No announcement was made on where the championship events will be held. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NO NATIONALS

On Monday, the NCAA said it was relocating seven of its championships scheduled to be played in the state.

Golden day in time trials

PARALYMPICS

B.C.'s Chernove wins C2 cycling event on big day for Canada

Tristen Chernove
GETTY IMAGES

Canadian cyclist Tristen Chernove is at his best when he's sailing along at 40 kilometres an hour.

Life is about as close as it can be to perfect.

The 41-year-old from Powell River, B.C., roared to gold in the time trial on Wednesday, for his third medal of the Paralympics.

RIO2016

And in the moments after the victory, Chernove talked about how para-cycling is helping him adapt to the ravages of Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, and of that wonderful feeling of flying.

"It's totally freeing," Chernove said, with a wide grin. "Believe me, overcoming what some would consider limitations created by the disease is never on my mind. I'm just being an athlete, I'm just doing all I can."

Chernove raced to a time of 27 minutes 43.16 seconds in the C2 category.

The Canadian, who just joined the national team last year, also has a pair of medals from the track: a silver in the 3,000-metre individual pursuit, and bronze in the 1,000-metre time trial.

Ross Wilson of Sherwood Park, Alta., captured silver in the C1 category for his second medal in Rio, Charles Moreau of Victoriaville, Que., took bronze in the H3 class, Calgary's Michael Sametz took bronze in the men's C3 event, and Shelley Gautier of Niagara Falls, Ont., was third in the combined C1 and C2 race.

Chernove was a competitive paddler who took up cycling after being diagnosed with CMT, a degenerative disease that affects the peripheral nerves and causes the muscles to atrophy.

Cycling can't stop the degeneration of his lower legs and lower arms, Chernove said — it's the nature of the disease.

"I have to learn how to be OK with that," he said. "However, psychologically, to be fitter than I've been in my whole life feels wonderful." THE CANADIAN PRESS

LONG-AWAITED WIN IN THE POOL

- Katarina Roxon finally has a Paralympic medal. The Kippens, N.L., native won gold in the S8 100-metre breaststroke for her first medal in three Games.
- Roxon, who was born missing her left arm below the elbow, recorded an Americas record time of one minute 19.44 seconds to capture the event.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Sporting's chance not taken in Madrid

Cristiano Ronaldo and Alvaro Morata scored very late goals as Real Madrid came from behind to beat Sporting Lisbon 2-1 and avoid starting the defence of its Champions League title with a shock defeat on Wednesday.

Ronaldo equalized from an 89th minute free kick against his former club and Morata netted the winner deep in injury time to give the hosts a hard-fought victory in a match which Sporting had largely under control.

"I'm happy with the points. We suffered but never gave up," Real Madrid manager Zinedine Zidane said. "I don't know if the result was fair or not, but it's clear we believed. You have to play until the end. It wasn't a perfect match, you never see a perfect match, but the important thing was to win."

Madrid, trying to become the first team to win back-to-back Champions League titles since the tournament's new format went into effect in the 1992-93 season, avoided what would have been only its second loss in 31 Champions League matches at home. It has won 27 times and drawn three at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

Cristiano Ronaldo
GETTY IMAGES

Sporting was just a few minutes away from its first win in 11 matches in Spain in UEFA competitions.

Boosted by a loud visiting crowd, Sporting played well from the start, defending with efficiency and creating dangerous chances up front with well-timed counterattacks and accurate passing.

Bruno Cesar put the Portuguese side ahead only three minutes into the second half. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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RECIPE Fresh Tomato Spaghetti

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Scoop up all the local tomatoes you can find and make this quick and easy pasta dish.

Ready in 20 minutes
Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 15 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 500 g package of whole-wheat spaghetti
- 3 Tbsp red wine vinegar
- 2 cups fresh tomatoes, washed and chopped
- 1 head of arugula, washed and rough chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Put a big pot of well salted water on to boil.

2. In a sauté pan, bring the olive oil to low-medium heat.

3. Add garlic and allow to cook but not brown — just a couple of minutes. Take the pan off the heat.

4. Cook pasta according to package instructions. Scoop out a cup of water before draining. The starchy water is a great way to loosen up a too-thick sauce, plus it adds a certain slickness to your pastas.

5. Drain noodles before tossing back in the pot. Add garlic-infused oil and vinegar and toss until all of the spaghetti is coated. Add tomatoes and toss again. Pour in cooking liquid, bit by bit, until your sauce is the desired consistency (you may not need much).

6. Throw in the arugula and give it another good mix so there are pieces of green throughout. Taste before adding a bit of salt and pepper.

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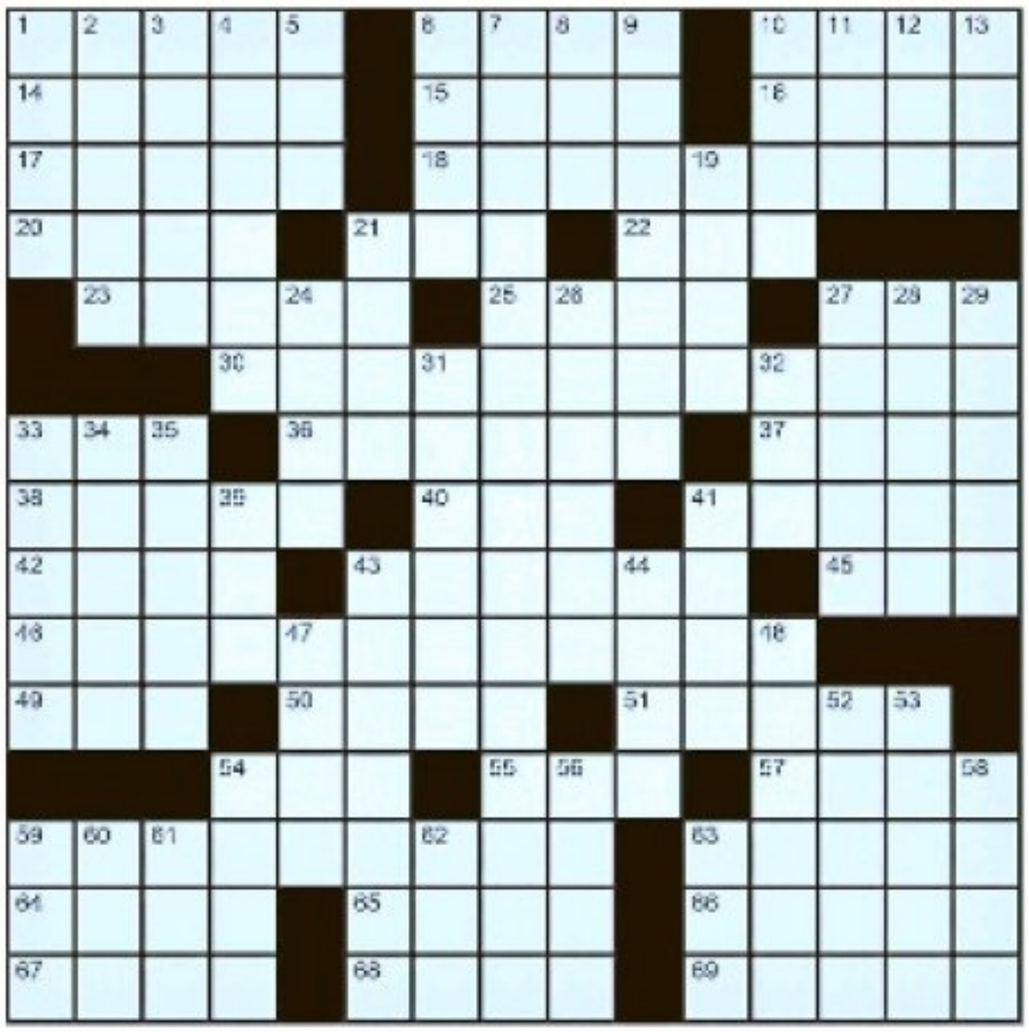
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Late
6. Transfixed
10. "Darn!"
14. Daisy type
15. Length measure
16. Irving Bacheller novel, _ Holden
17. Naomi Watts 2013 biopic
18. NHL goaltending great from Carman, Manitoba: 2 wds.
20. "_ the Explorer"
21. 'Cent' add-on (Man/horse creature)
22. Theory†of†Relativity brainiac ...his initials-sharers
23. Gladiator's 3,600
25. Eight, in Latin
27. Corn-eater's cast off
30. 1970s TV drama starring the Melfort, Saskatchewan born actor at #7-Down, "_ _, Counselor at Law"
33. "The X Files" actor ...his initials-sharers
36. Steal
37. Scandinavian story
38. Major upsets
40. 'Block' suffix
41. Faded jean areas
42. Take apart
43. Excoriate
45. AC/DC song
46. Vintage records purchaser's interest: 2 wds.
49. Swine spot
50. Mouth off
51. Clark _ (Jennifer Grey's actor hubby)
54. Cleveland NBA-er
55. Treasure Island author's monogram
57. Dismounted
59. Quebec City attraction, Le Chateau _
63. "Well done!"
64. Archaeological discovery
65. Actress Tara
66. Astronaut Neil Armstrong's middle name
67. Daughter, e.g., on a family tree
68. Lacking
69. Funny Canadian Mike

DOWN
1. "Hello It's Me" by _ Rundgren
2. Self-evident truth
3. Fortify once more
4. Bundle of energy
5. Posh positive
6. Andre _ (Dutch violinist/conductor)
7. Sci-Fi thriller of 1971 starring Canadian actor Arthur Hill based on Michael Crichton's 1969 breakout novel, with The: 2 wds.
8. Banned pollutant, commonly
9. Stage star's site
10. Li'l word meanings
11. Blood-typing letters
12. Modern, in Germany
13. "Welcome to the Jungle" rock gr.
19. Zodiac's roarers
21. Banda _ (City in Sumatra in Indonesia)
24. ABC's ballroom show
26. Legendary talk show host Dick
27. Military trainee
28. Of the distant past
29. Explosion emanation!
31. B-vitamin family member
32. She-chicken
33. Plays like Neil Peart
34. Tim Hortons snack
35. Dishwatery
39. You: French
41. Simple Minds singer Jim
43. Remington electric grooming products
44. Harleys, to bikers
47. 'Pluto' suffix
48. Medical chekup frequency
52. Open space in a wooded area
53. Bestower
54. "Squawk Box" network
56. Flat-screen TVs, e.g.
58. Weight units, US-style
59. Flower delivery co.
60. Kind of deer
61. Mantric syllables
62. PBS funding org.
63. Slamming noise!

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
You might be doing a slow boil about something because silly errors at work make you impatient. Nevertheless, by sounding off, you will gain nothing, and you might make things worse!

Taurus April 21 - May 21
A discussion about shared property will meet with resistance from someone else today. This is a poor day to ask for a loan or mortgage or for a favour from someone.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Relations with parents, bosses and authority figures will be challenging at some point today. That's why life might feel hard. "Nobody loves me." (Relax. This is a fleeting thing.)

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Teachers and anyone involved in medicine and the law might be difficult to deal with today. In fact, avoid subjects like politics, religion and racial issues, because they will be too difficult to discuss.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
If you are talking about loans, mortgages and shared property today, you will meet with obstacles. Someone in authority will not approve. Choose another day!

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Your relations with close friends and partners are difficult today, because there seems to be a lack of emotional flexibility. Someone might even be depressed. Don't take this personally.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
This is not the day to ask your boss or a co-worker for help. Their response will be, "Talk to the hand." (Oops.)

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Children might be an increased responsibility today. Just accept this because, hey, it goes with the territory. Don't try to change rules in sports today

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
This is not the day to ask a parent or someone in a position of authority in the family for help. They will not be receptive. Just bide your time and wait for another day.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Everyone is a bit negative today. It's not just you. Don't take it personally and do not react.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
This is a poor day for financial decisions because someone will block what you want to do. Choose another day. Timing is everything.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Today the Moon is opposite your sign and at odds with stern Saturn. That's why it is difficult to get along with others. (It's not just you.)

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

							2	7
		6		8	3	4		
	9		6			7		
	6	7	8	1	5	2	3	
		8			9		1	
		3	4	7		8		
5	1							

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Jason M
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